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*Fern Trail at Portman Preserve*

October 2019

# SEEDLINGS

Wild Ones|Kalamazoo Area Chapter

**What more substantial service to conservation than to  
practice it on one's own land?--Aldo Leopold**

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**In This Issue**

**Urban Plant  
Communities**



*Brown-Eyed Susans in an urban garden setting.*

## **Plant Communities In The Urban Environment**

**Wed. October 23, 7pm**

It is tempting to try to duplicate the function of natural wetlands, woodlands and other native habitats using native plants in our man-made environment. Matt's presentation will include discussion of ways to think about creating plant communities and how garden design and new methods of landscape maintenance can help us create resilient, beautiful plantings. [\*More Info\*](#)

**Project:  
Kalamazoo  
Loaves & Fishes**

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Tussock Moth:  
Unlucky**

**A KAWO Survey**

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## **Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes & Wild Ones**

**Kim Patrie, Co-Editor**

Wild Ones | Kalamazoo Area Chapter recently teamed up with Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes to help them create a pollinator garden and monarch waystation on the grounds of their new building. The project was funded by Monarch Joint Venture, The Nancy Small Memorial Fund, and KLF.



The all-day event started in the morning with informative presentations by Kyle Kasten of Monarch Joint Venture, and our own Tom Small, co-founder of KAWO. The event included a tasty lunch and children's activities before we headed out for the afternoon of (rather wet!) planting.

An enjoyable and productive day, it concluded with the completion of a new native plant garden. Steve Allen of Geum Services designed the garden and supervised the planting. If you'd like to see the planting, stop by the KLF building at 901 Portage Street in Kalamazoo, on the corner of Jackson and Portage.

Many thanks to all who attended and volunteered to make this collaborative, community project a success!

*Photos by Steve Allen, and Ruth Small*



## **Milkweed Seeds Needed!**

**Wednesday October 23 @7:00 PM**

Our [Wild Ones for Monarchs](#) program is in need of milkweed seeds to give away to local organizations and community members. Please bring your seeds processed, labeled and wrapped in paper (envelope or small bag) to Ilse Gebhard [THIS WEDNESDAY at our regular indoor program](#). Click the video link for easy processing technique. ***Thank you!***



This video shows an easy, mess-free way to harvest milkweed seeds.  
(It will open in YouTube.)

## **The Sycamore Tussock Moth: Not Very Lucky**

Ilse Gebhard



I called the caterpillar “Bunny” because it reminded me of those fuzzy kids’ slippers with rabbit ears. Bunny was hanging by a strand of silk from the Sycamore in our front yard and it clearly needed a good home, namely a jar with fresh Sycamore leaves.

Bunny was about one inch long and had an orange head. It was covered with pale orange hair and had a pair of white and orange hair pencils on each side of the 2nd and 3rd thoracic segments and two white hair pencils on the rear segment.

David L. Wagner’s book *Caterpillars of Eastern North America* identifies it as the Sycamore Tussock Moth, a Sycamore specialist. It is similar to Banded Tussock Moth, which I had

found previously, and which has a black head, white and black hair pencils, and grayish hair.



Sycamore Moth, parasitized



Banded Tussock Moth

After nibbling on Sycamore leaves for a few days, Bunny stopped feeding. Since it was late August I expected it to spin a cocoon and pupate. Instead I was shocked one morning to discover 10 tiny, off-white silky cocoons attached to the hairs of the caterpillar. The cocoons measured 5 mm ( $3/16^{\text{th}}$  of an inch) and there were black spots on the skin of the caterpillar where the larva, that had spun the cocoons, had emerged. Bunny was, of course, dead.

In the interest of learning, I over-wintered the cocoons and on June 10<sup>th</sup> the following spring tiny insects, half the size of their cocoons (2.5 mm), emerged. Inspecting one of them under the microscope, and studying my insect books, confirmed them to be brachonid wasps.

Brachonid wasps lay their eggs on caterpillars. Once the wasp larvae emerge from their eggs, they burrow into the host and feed until they are ready to pupate. They then emerge thru the skin, attach themselves to the caterpillar, and form their cocoon, which is what I had observed.

The following year I found another “Bunny” in mid-August. It looked a little bedraggled, having lost some of its hair pencils. Did it have a narrow escape from a bird? It was a year we had cuckoos around all summer and they are known to love hairy caterpillars.

After happily munching Sycamore leaves in a jar for 7 days, “Bunny II” spun a cocoon on the side of the jar, incorporating its hair. Inside the cocoon could be seen the 1/2-inch long, brown pupa. Looking forward to having a moth emerge in spring, I was again disappointed, as late in September a larva emerged instead. The larva pupated and 10 days later a tachinid fly emerged. This was the first time, but not the last, that I observed a species of moth or butterfly parasitized by two different insect species, and it had to be such a cute rascal.

Alas, no more Bunnys after that. The Sycamore was struck by lightning and leaning towards the house. It was huge and would have obliterated the house had it come down in a storm. On a plus note, one of the culprits of my spring allergy is Sycamore pollen.

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**Help KAWO Become the Organization YOU Want It To Be**

**Kim Patrie, Co-Editor**

If you missed last month's meeting on the history of our forests, not only did you miss an interesting presentation by Larry Cornelus, you also missed the opportunity to fill out a survey to let us know how we can improve our organization.

For your convenience, because we know you want to help us create our BEST KAWO, please [Click This Link](#) to fill out the 7 question survey. Two minutes of your time will do a community good! And Thank You!

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## **What's Happening at the National Office**

Check out our [National Office web site!](#) To read the August & September reports from the board of directors, [log in to the member only area](#). Thanks for your interest and support of Wild Ones!

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**SEEDLINGS** is edited by Tom Small and Kim Patrie. It appears mostly monthly. The next regular issue will come early in November. **Deadline for November issue is October 25.** Please send submissions to Kim at [safiraraks@gmail.com](mailto:safiraraks@gmail.com)

**To share comments and suggestions, simply reply to this email. We look forward to hearing from you!**

Find more information and news at [www.KalamazooWildOnes.org](http://www.KalamazooWildOnes.org) and [www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes](https://www.Facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes)



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